

School of Planning, Public Policy and Management



PPPM 201 – Introduction to Public Policy

CRN 24408

Class Syllabus — Winter 2024

Instructor	Jesse Maldonado	
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Phone	208.503.0029	
Office Location and Hours	Hendricks Hall 13 — Office Hours by appointment	
Class Location	110 Fenton Hall	
Class Meeting Days and Time	Tuesdays and Thursdays: 2:00 - 3:20 pm	
Discussion Section Meetings	Fridays – time and location varies	
GEs	Suzannah Burke	Emily Severeid
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Office Location	Hendricks 6C	Hendricks 6C
Office Hours	By appointment	By appointment

Course Description

Public policy is what public officials within government, and the citizens they represent, choose to do or not to do regarding public issues. Public policy decisions affect us at the national level (e.g., health care and national defense) and at the local and individual level (e.g., sidewalks, parks, housing).

The goal of this introductory course is to provide an overview of public policy, the policy process, and how the daily lives of us and our neighbors are affected by those making and implementing decisions. The goal is for students to understand how politics, institutions, and everyday people play a role in the process. A focus on meaningful ways to engage in the policy process from city hall to Congress, hold policy makers accountable, and support policies that will make positive changes.

Learning Outcomes

I have several objectives I want to achieve in this class:

1. Provide students with a better understanding of the policy process, including the key elements, inputs and outputs, official and unofficial actors, agenda setting by policymakers and the media, politics, power, and groups;
2. Expose you to the origins, impacts, and consequences (both intended and unintended) of some of the policies that affect us daily;
3. Give you a chance to learn more about a policy that interests you by providing an opportunity to conduct research and write about that policy;
4. Develop your ability to work in a team, an essential element of success in the professional world;
5. Engage in discussions around content not discussed during lecture as well as policies of interest to you and your peers;
6. Observe and engage in the policy development process.

Textbooks and Course Materials

Public policy: Politics, analysis, and alternatives; 7th Edition

Authors: Michael Kraft & Scott Furlong | ISBN: 1544374615 | [Duckstore](#)

Additional readings if necessary will be on Canvas

Grading

This class is offered on either a graded or pass/no pass basis. Your grade will be determined based on the following:

1. Attendance	5%
2. Intro Assignment	5%
3. Policy Portfolio	20%
4. Meeting Critique	10%
5. Weekly Reading Quizzes	15%
6. Multiple Choice Questions for Final	5%
7. Friday discussion section:	
a) Participation	10%
b) Presentation	10%
8. Final exam (online)	<u>20%</u>
TOTAL	100%

Course Structure

This course intends to expose students to the broad topic of public policy. Within the topic, there is significant room for flexibility. I want to use this opportunity to engage you in the topic by incorporating your interests and feedback in designing many of the elements of the course.

This class also includes discussion sessions that meet on Fridays, led by Emily and Suzannah. These sessions provide an opportunity for students to have more in-depth discussions about public policy in a smaller setting that allows for more student engagement.

Course Website

The course website is located on the University of Oregon's Canvas system (<https://canvas.uoregon.edu>). The class syllabus, supplemental readings, and other materials will be posted on the Canvas site. Please check the course website frequently for updates.

Accessibility

The University of Oregon is working to create inclusive learning environments. Please notify me if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in disability-related barriers to your participation. You are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center (formerly Disability Services) in 360 Oregon Hall at 541.346.1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

Diversity

The University of Oregon values our diversity and seeks to foster equity and inclusion in a welcoming, safe, and respectful community. This course is committed to upholding this principle by encouraging the exploration, engagement, and expression of different perspectives and diverse identities. I will value each class member's experiences and contributions, and communicate disagreements respectfully. Please notify me if you feel aspects of the course undermine these principles. For additional resources, you are also encouraged to contact the following campus services:

- Division of Equity and Inclusion: 1 Johnson Hall or 541.346.3175 or <http://inclusion.uoregon.edu/>
- Center on Diversity and Community: 54 Susan Campbell Hall or 541.346.3212 or <http://codac.uoregon.edu/>
- Bias Education and Response Team (BERT): 164 Oregon Hall or bert@uoregon.edu or <http://bias.uoregon.edu>

Statement Regarding Title IX and a Safe Learning Environment Free from Discrimination and Harassment

The UO is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination, harassment, and assault. This includes conduct that unreasonably discriminates among individuals on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, ethnicity, age, religion, marital status, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. It also includes sexual and physical assault, domestic and dating violence, and gender based stalking. We support Title IX.

If you, or someone you know, has experienced or experiences harassment or discrimination that is sufficiently severe or pervasive that it interferes with work or academic performance—or if you have experienced sexual or physical assault in any form—the UO has staff members trained to support and make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to the resources you need. You may choose whether or not to access these resources.

Students wishing to pursue a complaint involving discrimination or harassment should contact the Office of Affirmative Action & Equal Opportunity at 541.346.3123 or <http://aaeo.uoregon.edu>. If you wish to speak to someone confidentially regarding sexual assault or harassment, call 541.346.SAFE, UO's 24-hour hotline, or visit the SAFE website, <http://safe.uoregon.edu>. The University Health Center and University Counseling and Testing Center can provide assistance and work confidentially with students.

Inclusion Statement

The College of Design is a community that values inclusion. We are committed to equal opportunities for all faculty, staff and students to develop individually, professionally, and academically regardless of ethnicity, heritage, gender, sexual orientation, ability, socio-economic standing, cultural beliefs and traditions. We are dedicated to an environment that is inclusive and fosters awareness, understanding, and respect for diversity. If you feel excluded or threatened, please contact your instructor and/or school head.

Center for Multicultural Academic Excellence

The CMAE is a place where students are empowered, engaged, and nurtured for success. Their vision is to build and empower an inclusive and diverse community of scholars who exemplify academic excellence and inspire positive change. CMAE's mission is to promote student retention and persistence for historically underrepresented and underserved populations. They develop and implement programs and services that support retention, academic excellence, and success at the UO and beyond. Call 541.346.3479, email cmae@uoregon.edu, or visit Suites 164 and 165 in Oregon Hall.

Mental Health

As a student, you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may impact your academic performance or reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. The University of Oregon is committed to advancing the mental health and well-being of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via <https://health.uoregon.edu/mental-health> or by calling 541.346.2770.

Life's Challenges

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in school, is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support. Furthermore, please let me know as well if you are uncomfortable in doing so. This will enable me to provide any resources that I have access to. **You're more than a student and I want support your health and well being outside of our classroom.**

Late Assignment Policy

If you are unable to make it to class on the day an assignment is due, you may email your assignment to me prior to the class time and date that assignment is due. Late assignments receive only partial credit. If an answer key is posted to the website, however, no late homework assignments are accepted (no credit). *Other circumstances will be handled on a case-by-case basis.*

Incomplete Policy

Students are expected to behave professionally and to turn in all materials at the designated time. Per university regulations, an incomplete will only be given when "the quality of work is satisfactory but a minor yet essential requirement of the course has not been completed for reasons acceptable to the instructor."

Academic Misconduct

You are expected to do your own work. Copying content from other students and submitting it as your own work is grounds for failing the class. The University Student Conduct Code (available at <http://conduct.uoregon.edu>) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor.

Plagiarism

Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g., quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students' obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. For additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, visit: <http://libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students>.

Assignments

There is a variety of requirements for this class. Listed below are general descriptions of each class assignment; I will provide additional detail on each assignment as the term progresses.

Intro Assignment + Memo (5%)

You will be completing a practice 20 question US Civics Test. The questions on the test are pulled from those asked of individuals who are seeking citizenship in the United States. You will submit a reflection memo after you complete this assignment. You will not be graded on how well you do on the practice test, rather on your thoughts in the memo.

The memo will include the following:

- Your results of the test
- Responses to these questions outlined in the memo template on canvas:
 - Were you surprised by your test score?
 - What did you miss, if any, and why do you think you missed them?
 - What questions did you struggle with?
 - Did you find this easier or harder than you anticipated?
- Concluding thoughts on the test and your feelings on the rules, questions and instructions regarding this test and the questions themselves feel appropriate to have applicants for US citizenship to answer.

Weekly Reading Quizzes (15%)

We will be reading and discussing the Kraft and Furlong book. For chapters 1-6, you will need to complete a weekly reading quiz by 11:59 the night before we discuss each chapter in class (see Schedule and Readings for dates):

- The quizzes will consist of multiple choice questions from the material found within the chapter.
- In addition to the multiple choice, you will need to identify **two aspects of the reading you didn't understand**, and briefly discuss why these confusing aspects interfered with your general understanding of the reading (1-2 sentences each). You may find more than two confusing elements, but you must put them in priority order and limit yourself to the two most important ones. If you didn't find anything confusing, state that.
- Pose **one** Reading Response Question, written in an open-ended fashion to facilitate discussion, and in a way that affords the opportunity for multiple valid responses (e.g., starting with *how*, *why*, or *to what extent*). These questions will form the basis for in-class discussions of the chapter content.

Assignment Schedule and Timing Related to Kraft & Furlong Readings

Before class	Read book chapter Complete Weekly Reading Quiz on Canvas by 11:59 pm day before class
In class	Lecture / discussion of chapter content Discuss randomly-selected responses from quiz

Policy Portfolio (20%)

Each student will complete a policy portfolio for a policy of their choice. This portfolio will comprise three separate assignments.

1. Research Memo
2. Constituent Correspondence to an Elected Official
3. Reflection Memo on Constituent Correspondence

The goal is to ensure students pick a policy that they are passionate about, do research on the policy, and then write an elected official of their choosing to make a call to action. Once the student has done their research and sent the letter they will write a reflection of their policy, as well as the process corresponding with an elected official and their office.

Multiple-Choice Questions for Final Exam (5%)

For each class during weeks 7-9, you will be asked to develop one multiple-choice question, based on the content, or assigned reading from the day, which might be guest speaker, or instructor-led. Questions will be expected to focus on higher-order cognitive processes, like analysis or evaluation. Questions that are accurate and grammatically correct will go into a test bank, which will form the basis for the final exam, described below. **Students must submit a minimum of four questions.**

Meeting Critique (10%)

Each student will be expected to attend one policy-relevant meeting at any point during the term and then write a critique memo of that meeting. Course content should guide the critique. The chosen meeting might have local, state, regional, federal, or international implications, and must be led by elected (not appointed) officials. This could include meetings of county commissioners, city councils,

school boards (K-12, community college, or university), or special districts (e.g., library, water, transportation, or recreation districts). It may take a while to identify and attend a meeting that fits your schedule, so you should start planning early. You'll need to follow the steps described below.

1. Attend the approved meeting
2. Take detailed notes on the attended meeting (either in-person or online)
3. Process meeting notes into a coherent idea for critique
4. Select a theoretical framework from Birkland or another source to guide the critique (we will discuss this in class)
5. Identify the meeting's strengths and weaknesses, and recommend changes to improve the meeting
6. Write and submit a 1000+ word (3-5 pages double-spaced) critique via Canvas by the due date (see the rubric posted on Canvas for additional details).

Friday Discussion Section

Attendance and Participation (10%)

You registered for this class because you were interested in learning more about public policy, so the best way to accomplish that goal is to attend class all three days we meet each week. If you can't attend class, you should coordinate with your classmates to ensure you are current with class content.

We want you to participate in class by asking questions and engaging in the ensuing discussions. The research evidence demonstrates that students learn more and develop critical thinking skills through participation in discussion, which is why it is included as a course requirement.

Presentation (10%)

You will make a presentation as part of a team in your Friday discussion section. Students will choose a group and select a topic and presentation week.

Final Exam (20%)

The final exam will be a series of multiple choice questions derived from the policy presentation responses submitted during weeks 7-9 of the term. There may also be short answer questions. The exam will be administered in Canvas during the time of our scheduled final (March 18th 12:30-2:30pm). We will discuss the specifics of this exam as we approach the end of the term. We will also have a prep class for the Final during Week 10.

Schedule and Readings

The following schedule may be adjusted as we move through the term, depending on the student's interests and the length of time we discuss particular issues.

The reading list may be supplemented as the term progresses. Please check the Canvas site weekly to see the **additional readings**.

Week	Date	Topic	Readings	Assignment uploaded to Canvas and due date
1	1/09	Introduction to Class		Welcome Survey (end of class)
	1/11	NO CLASS		Intro Assignment + Reflection Memo (Mon 1/15)
	1/12	Discussion sections meet		
2	1/16	Public Policy & Politics	Chapter 1	Reading Quiz 1 (Mon 1/15)
	1/18	Guest Speaker: Steve Adams		
	1/19	Discussion sections meet		
3	1/23	Government Institutions and Policy Actors	Chapter 2	Reading Quiz 2 (Mon 1/22)
	1/25	Government Institutions and Policy Actors		Policy Research Memo (Sun 1/28)
	1/26	Discussion sections meet		
4	1/30	Understanding Public Policymaking	Chapter 3	Reading Quiz 3 (Mon 1/29)
	2/1	Policy Analysis: An Introduction	Chapter 4	Reading Quiz 4 (Wed 1/30)
	2/2	Discussion sections meet		
5	2/6	Public Problems and Policy Alternatives	Chapter 5	Reading Quiz 5 (Mon)
	2/8	Public Problems and Policy Alternatives		Letter to Elected Official (Sun 2/11)
	2/9	Discussion sections meet		
6	2/13	Assessing Policy Alternatives	Chapter 6	Reading Quiz 6 (Mon)
	2/15	Assessing Policy Alternatives	See Canvas	Letter to Elected Official Reflection (Sun 2/18)

Week	Date	Topic	Readings	Assignment uploaded to Canvas and due date
	2/16	Discussion sections meet		
7	2/20	Topic determined by class	See Canvas	Final MC Questions (Tue)
	2/21	Topic determined by class	See Canvas	Final MC Questions (Thu)
	2/22	Discussion sections meet		
8	2/27	Topic determined by class	See Canvas	Final MC Questions (Tue)
	2/29	Guest Speaker: Mayor Lucy Vinis	See Canvas	Final MC Questions (Thu)
	3/1	Discussion sections meet		
9	3/5	Topic determined by class	See Canvas	Final MC Questions (Tue)
	3/7	Topic determined by class	See Canvas	Final MC Questions (Thu) Meeting Critique (Sun)
	3/8	Discussion sections meet		
10	3/11	NO CLASS		
	3/14	Class Wrap-up Final Prep Class Evaluation		
	3/15	Discussion sections meet		
FINAL	3/18	Final exam (online) opens at 12:30		FINAL EXAM DUE: 2:30 PM

**No late work will be accepted after the end of our final examination time:
Monday, March 18 at 2:30 pm**